

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Michael Abbondandolo, and I am from Branford. I am also part of The Semilla Collective

I stand in support of SB284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to Husky up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in making sure our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we all need and deserve.

Healthcare is essential to protect ourselves from sickness and keep our community healthy. Before I received Husky, I did not have access to Medical Insurance for Healthcare. During this period, I delayed routine checkups such as physicals as I was unable to afford going to a doctor's office without insurance. This barrier in accessing healthcare caused me to avoid being proactive in my health. If I had access to healthcare during this time I would have been regularly going to the doctor's as needed and been able to stay current on my health. I am fortunate now to have access to Husky which has allowed me to find healthcare providers and receive quality affordable healthcare.

Some of my friends have not been able to qualify for Husky due to immigration status. I have seen them struggle both financially and physically without access to healthcare. Their medical bills have been getting increasingly more expensive as they struggle to make ends meet. Friends have told me how they will avoid seeking medical attention when they need it because they are unable to afford it. It is unacceptable in 2022 that Connecticut residents have to endure so much suffering and poor health due to immigration status. The State needs to provide Healthcare to all residents regardless of immigration status. SB284 is a step towards making that a reality.

I am advocating for the State to pass SB 284 to expand upon the legislation passed last year granting Husky to young children regardless of immigration status, as well as it being critical during a pandemic.

Last year the State Legislature expanded Husky Coverage to include children up to 8 years old regardless of immigration status. SB 284 will be building upon that legislation to ensure that children will continue to receive Husky until they are 18 years old. This will allow children to be able to receive the necessary healthcare they may need as navigate their way through adolescence.

By passing SB 284 the state will be strengthening Connecticut's Public Health. In order to have robust Public Health there needs to be access to healthcare. Covid-19 has shown the dangers associated with barriers to healthcare as demonstrated by the disproportionate effect it has had on immigrant communities. SB 284 will ensure that all children from birth to 18 years old will have access to healthcare. This will allow children to receive healthcare which in turn will strengthen the health of the community and the entire state.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,  
Michael Abbondandolo